

YOUTH DETENTION — SUICIDE AND SELF-HARM ATTEMPTS

**73. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to the 37 juveniles who have been held at unit 18 at Casuarina Prison since being transferred from Banksia Hill Detention Centre in July 2022, and the shocking revelation that 25 of them have engaged in self-harm, including two incidents of serious self-harm, and seven attempted suicides.

- (1) Does the minister agree that his government is failing in its duty to keep these children safe?
- (2) Why does the minister continue to ignore the advice and concern of experts in children's health and justice, like the Telethon Kids Institute, a former Children's Court judge and Inspector of Custodial Services, and the Aboriginal Legal Service, that there is no place for juveniles in an adult prison and irreparable damage is being caused to these individuals?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:**

- (1) No.
- (2) I remind the member that she was part of a government that transferred 68 young people —

**Ms M.J. Davies:** You have been in charge for six years.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I cannot answer a question without them interjecting.

Let me go through this again. Sixty-eight young people were transferred to an adult prison and housed with adult prisoners. There are no juveniles at the moment held in any custody in Western Australia by the Department of Corrective Services who are not in a juvenile justice facility. I have explained this previously. Unit 18 is not currently part of the adult prison estate. It was declared, by me, separate to Casuarina Prison, and is operated, as I have explained dozens of times here in the chamber and elsewhere, as not part of the adult corrective estate; it is operated, maintained and managed separately. There is no interaction, unlike when the member for Central Wheatbelt held children in an adult facility with adults. This is a separate facility. It is a 128-bed unit, and there are 10 people in there today. It has been done. I remind everybody about this. There was a crisis of safety at Banksia Hill Detention Centre because a small cohort of young offenders was attacking the staff. If we do not protect the staff, there is no possibility of providing a rehabilitative environment. Until the staff are safe, no-one is safe. I do not understand why the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA are constantly criticising the staff of corrective services. They are doing a difficult job well. Generally speaking, they are doing a difficult job well to provide the appropriate therapeutic environment to get these violent offenders off their offending behaviour.